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About the Cover:

Yellowstone Wolf contemplates its future, see story page 5.

Photo by USFS.



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Wolf At The River

By Valerie Wedel

There is hot debate about wild wolves returning to Colorado. Some humans are in favor, others are frightened by the notion. Does our long European history of using wolves to craft horror stories such as red riding hood, and many werewolf tales, unfairly bias those of us of European descent? Or are these hard learned cautionary tales? How about science? Does science weigh in regarding wild wolves?

In November of 2020 voters will be asked to decide if wolves should be re-introduced into Colorado, west of the continental divide, by 2023. Proponents in favor believe this will strengthen our ecology and improve the health of deer and elk herds. There may also be an untapped market, guiding wolf-loving tourists on "safaris" in search of photo ops of wild wolves! It is a huge and very important step for voters to be asked to vote to restore an endangered species. However, not all Coloradans are in favor.

Scientists speak of the wolf being an apex predator. This simply means wolves, along with humans, sit at the very top of the food chain. Wolves compete with us for food. Humans are also apex predators. Is it possible we are turning wolves into scapegoats simply because they compete with us?

Is there any reliable data on wolves actually being good for us? One recent scientific theory from Yellowstone Park says re-introducing wolves created a very helpful chain reaction ("trophic cascade," in science terms), repairing river edges (riparian zones). Prior to the wolves return, elk caused severe erosion and decimated aspen, willow and cottonwood trees that would normally stabilize

river edges. This destruction occurred over many decades, and despite any and all human interventions. The destruction of plants by elk in Yellowstone Park also destroyed habitat for a variety of animal species. As habitat went away, other animals including beavers also disappeared. This had far reaching consequences on worsening environmental conditions.

Since re-introducing wolves, the Yellowstone river edges have recovered. Willow, aspen and cottonwood have been recovering. Smaller animals have been returning, and the ecosystem seems to be greatly improved. According to a publication from the National Park Service, *Cycles and Processes (NPS, 2019):*

"Accumulated studies show that the loss of wolves from the food web on

the northern range in the 1930s led to a loss of willows and other woody plants due to excessive grazing by elk. Most researchers agree that reintroduced wolves have contributed to fewer elk and changes in elk behavior... studies have shown a correlation between the presence of wolves and increased growth in willows. However, not all scientists agree..." Some scientists speculate changing weather patterns have also helped foster greater regrowth of some of these trees.

One theory is that wolves visit rivers to drink and watch for game, and so elk no longer spend all their time there, trampling and over-browsing native trees. As native plants have been recovering, they are able to shelter other animals that also play important roles in a healthy ecosystem. The stream banks and rivers have become more stable and healthy.

In Colorado, many ranchers are concerned their stock will be eaten by wild wolves. The federal government pays compensation for livestock eaten by wolves. One such program in New Mexico is: http://www.coexistencecouncil.org/our-coexistence-plan.html Some of the feedback from this program includes ranchers expressing concerns that not enough money is in the program to adequately reimburse ranchers for wolf kills. Ranchers also believe they have observed cattle being affected badly by the stress of being preyed upon, impacting their ability to thrive.

According to Jim Pribyl, former Chair of Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission, and Eric Washburn, big game hunter, "...in the Northern Rockies wolves are responsible for less than 1% of livestock mortality in areas where their ranges overlap..."

(Continued on next page.)



Highlander Wildlife

(Denver Post, 1/14/20)

For human hunters worried about their ability to continue to hunt in western Colorado, data shows that moose make up less than 1% of wolves diets. Also, data indicates that in Wyoming, Idaho and Montana, elk and deer populations have actually grown since wild wolves were re-introduced in 1995. Note this contradicts what most scientists believe to be true in Yellowstone Park. So how do we find truth? How do we balance what our environment needs to regain and stay healthy, with what humans want?

Anecdotally, at least one mountain biker here in Colorado commented he fears wolves and cougars. This mountain biker is afraid he might be attacked while out riding his bike in mountain trails. This writer fears bikers much more than wolves! Human bikers have been known to race along at breakneck speed with no thought to who may also be on the trail. Wolves by contrast are rather quiet and retiring. Shy, even. This writer has never been bothered by a wolf, but has actually been run down by bikers.

Are wolves even really among us? Many people living in Colorado now have relocated from other areas, in many cases cities in other parts of the country. Seeing an animal at a distance that looks somewhat wolf-like is not a positive identification. Dogs, coyotes and wolf hybrids all resemble wolves. How does one make a positive identification? How does one wade through conflicting reports (good wolf? bad wolf?) and theories to arrive at truth? Especially when this is such an emotionally charged topic?

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) released a statement January 8, 2020, that wolves may have entered Northwest Colorado. An article (Porras, M., 2020) published by CPW includes photographs of an elk carcass and paw prints in the snow. The paw prints looked like wolf prints,

according to CPW.

According to Porras, in October, 2019, an eyewitness spotted six large canids traveling together in Moffat County. The eye witness was part of a larger hunting party. One of the other members of the hunting party recorded video of two of the animals.

"The (October) sighting marks the first time in recent history CPW has received a report of multiple wolves traveling together," said CPW Northwest Regional Manager JT Romatzke. "In addition, in the days prior, the eyewitness says he heard distinct howls coming from different animals. In my opinion, this is a... credible report." (Excerpt, Porras, 2020)

The article goes on to remind us that wolves are on the endangered species list. Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff request anyone who believes they have seen a wild wolf to contact them. They can be reached at the following link, and have a report specific to wolf sightings: https://cpw.state.co.us/learn/Pages/Wolf-Sighting-Form.aspx

Meanwhile, back in Yellowstone, a new scientific study is underway (Kohl). By tracking movement and behavior of both elk herds and wild wolves, scientists hope to better understand what effect wild wolves are having on the rest of the park. Yellowstone is accessible year round to scientists, and represents possibly the last remaining land where we can observe nature and animals in this climate, as they may have lived before Europeans first arrived here. Restoring wolves to Yellowstone seems to have helped restore animal populations to a healthier balance, perhaps more similar to what they may have originally been. Thus far wild wolves seem to have helped the park, and the balance of animal and plant life.

As further research unfolds, we will update this article.

For now, the Colorado Park Service reminds us wolves are on the federal endangered species list. They are protected in Colorado. It is a federal crime to be caught harming a wild wolf in Colorado. Keep your fingers off the trigger – please do observe and report.

References:://cpw.state.co.us/aboutus /Pages/News-Release Details.aspx?NewsID=7209
Porras, M. Eyewitness account plus scavenged elk carcass indicates likely presence of multiple wolves in Colorado. CPW, 08 January, 2020. https://www.yellowstonewolf.org/habitat_use_northern_yellowstone_elk.php Kohl, M. Influence of top-down and bottom-up forces on movement and habitat use of northern Yellowstone elk. https://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/nature/cycles-and-processes.htm Cycles and Processes. Published by National Park Service. Last update: July, 2019.

Cycles and Processes. Published by National Park Service. Last update: July, 2019.

ttps://cpw.state.co.us/learn/Pages/Wolf-Sighting-Form.aspx Use this form on a computer connected to internet to report wolf sightings in Colorado. http://www.coexistencecouncil.org/our-coexistenceplan.html Wolf and livestock co-existence plan for Mexican grey wolf re-introduction in New Mexico. www.denverpost.com/2020/01/04/guest-commentary-ignore-those-viral-lies-about-wolves-in-colorado/J. Pribyl & E. Washburn. published in Denver Post, 02/14/20.www.denverpost.com/2020/01/06/colorado-wolves-reintroduction-ballot-measure/Published in Denver Post, 01/06/2020.



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Judge Decides In Boulder County's Favor For 1041

Boulder District Judge Andrew Macdonald decided in late December 2019 the case that Denver Water filed to not have to apply for the 1041 Permit to expand Gross Dam and Reservoir against Denver Water and stated in a seven page ruling based upon evidence placed on the record by both sides that Boulder County has not exceeded its jurisdiction with its permitting authority. The State House Bill 1041, passed in 1974, allows local governments to review and regulate matters of statewide interest through the local permitting process. (See in the next article some of the particulars of the 1041 regulations.)

Even the Federal Regulatory Energy Commission has long held Denver Water to task for getting local permits before they amend the existing hydroelectric in Gross Dam before they are willing to grant a permit to expand the dam and reservoir with the efforts by Denver Water's first scoping meetings in 2003 called the Moffat Collection System Project.

In order to obtain a permit, Denver Water will now need to submit a detailed application proving that they will be able to construct the proposed dam while complying with Boulder's requirements to conform to the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan. Just a brief glance at the next article detailing only a couple of pages from the 32 page document about the 1041 application shows concrete evidence Denver Water will not be able to comply with these strict guidelines that Coal Creek Canyon residents have been screaming about to all who will listen for years.

The Denver Water corrupt attempt all these years to act as if this proposed project 'Was a Done Deal' is now apparent in its efforts to cover up their true goal to sell water outside 'Denver Proper' to leases for development in the open spaces Boulder County has for so long tried to keep open. Even Denver Water bylaws state this effort goes against the guidelines to provide water and sustainable water storage for Denver residents, i.e. leases to suburban municipalities not withstanding.

While this ruling by Judge Macdonald is a step in the right direction: killing the Moffat Collection System Project it is not over according to Denver Water. Spokesman Travis Thompson said, "As we continue to follow the process of determining the appropriate permitting methods, we will review the order and evaluate our next steps. No matter the path forward, we remain committed to considering input from Boulder County and from community members to minimize and mitigate the impacts of the Project."

Same as the statement from a Denver Water attorney during opening statements at the last public hearing in 2019: this can be taken as a threat from Denver Water. They do not see the ruling by the judge as the last straw and they do not intend to throw in the towel and anyone that thinks they are or will is just plain naïve. Denver Water has invested too much time and money to let one ruling or even one permit stop them from continuing in their efforts to destroy the Colorado River, Coal Creek Canyon and all the surrounding environment in our bedroom communities. Any hollow statements saying Denver Water will remain committed to 'considering input' from Boulder County and Coal Creek Canyon residents is just that... hollow and empty statements to further their attempts to make folks think they can push this proposed project through no matter

what hurdles occur.

We must remain on our guard, we have to stay informed and we cannot turn a blind eye to the threat Denver Water and their goals to destroy our canyon still plan to work towards. This is a long-term environmental conservation issue for not only Boulder County, but also mostly Coal Creek Canyon and Northshore Residents. I take this moment to remind all readers that the only reason Arvada was able to annex land up to the railroad trestle and thus allow Candelas to be built is that we in the Canyon were distracted by fighting a Quarry effort. We won the battle to beat down the Quarry and lost big time to the greed of the city of Arvada.

I entreat readers, Coal Creek Canyon (Continued on next page.)

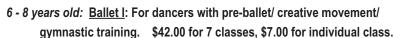
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Highlander Issues

residents and all others in our region to heed the warning that this is not over. Stay alert and informed, attend any public hearings you see about this issue and let your wishes to Stop the Expansion of Gross Dam and Reservoir be heard above the fray of all the many other things going on in our complex and often corrupted world. Don't take the easy route and end up complaining it happened when you weren't looking. The Highlander will continue to endeavor to keep you informed about this issue in particular but also the many other issues that crop up all the time that work to strip us of our quality of mountain life: quiet, nature, wildlife, clean air, uncongested roadways and bedroom communities that allow us to live in harmony with nature.

By A.M. Wilks

Boulder County Land Use Code • June 18, 2019
(Excerpt from 32 page county document)
Location & Extent Areas & Activities of State Interest
(1041)

The purpose of the location and extent review is to determine whether public or quasi-public utilities or uses proposed to be located in the unincorporated area of the County are in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

Proposals Requiring Review: The following projects, whether public or private, shall be subject to location and extent review: roads; parks; public ways, grounds, and spaces; public buildings and structures; and public utilities. The location and extent review of a proposal, as defined in Article 3, may be done concurrently with other discretionary County review processes.

No initial County hearing on any location and extent review application which Section 3-202 .A of this Code identifies as requiring compliance with Article 65.5 of Title 24, C.R. S may be held until the applicant provides a certification of compliance with Article 65.5 of Title 24, C.R. S signed by the applicant, confirming that the applicant or its agent has examined the records of the Boulder County Clerk and Recorder for the existence of any mineral estate owners or lessees that own less than full fee title in the property which is the subject of the application, and stating whether or not any such mineral estate owners or lessees exist. If any such mineral estate owners or lessees exist, the Applicant must sign an



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additional certification confirming that the applicant has, at least 30 days prior to the initial public hearing on the location and extent review, transmitted to the County and to the affected mineral estate owners and lessees the notices required by Article 65.5 of Title 24, C.R.S

In any case where information becomes known to the Land Use Director or the Board that an applicant has failed to provide notice of the initial public hearing on a location and extent review as required by Article 65.5 of Title 24, C.R.S., the Board or the Director on behalf of the Board may continue, may reschedule, or may vacate the initial public hearing to allow proper notice to be provided under Article 65.5 of Title 24, C.R.S

Location & Extent Areas & Activities of State Interest(1041) 8-201 Short Title

These regulations may be cited as the "Boulder County Regulations for Areas and Activities of State Interest" or the **Boulder County 1041 Regulations** or "these Regulations."

8-202 Purposes and Intent A. The general purpose of these regulations is to facilitate the identification, designation and regulation of areas or activities of state interest consistent with applicable statutory requirements. The specific purposes and intent are as follows: To encourage planned and orderly, efficient, economical land use development; Provide for the needs of agriculture, forestry, industry, business, residential communities, and recreation in future growth; Encourage uses of land and natural resources per their character and adaptability; Conserve soil, water, forest resources, and

Environmental Resources; Protect the beauty of the landscape; Promote efficient and economical use of public resources; Regulate projects that would otherwise cause excessive noise, water, and/or air pollution, or which would otherwise degrade or threaten the existing environmental quality within the

County. Ensure that new domestic water and sewage treatment systems shall be constructed in areas which will result in the proper utilization of existing treatment plants and the orderly development of domestic water and sewage treatment systems of adjacent communities.

Ensure that major extensions of domestic water and sewage treatment systems shall be permitted only in those areas in which the anticipated growth and development that may occur as a result of such extension can be accommodated within the financial and environmental capacity of the area to sustain such growth and development. Require that municipal and industrial water projects shall emphasize the most efficient use of water, including, to the extent permissible under existing law, the recycling and reuse of water. Ensure that urban development, population densities, and site layout and design of storm water and sanitation systems shall be accomplished in a manner that will prevent the pollution of

PAGE 8 February 2020

aquifer recharge areas.

Ensure that major facilities of public utilities are located to avoid direct conflict with adopted County land use plans, and otherwise serve the stated purposes of these regulations. Ensure that site selection of arterial highways and interchanges and collector highways occurs so that community traffic needs are met, desirable community patterns are not disrupted, and direct conflict with adopted local government, regional, and state master plans is avoided.

Provide that areas containing, or having a significant impact on, historical, natural, or archaeological resources of statewide importance are developed so as to be compatible with and not destructive to the historical, natural, and archaeological value of such resources. Ensure that areas around interchanges involving arterial highways are developed to discourage traffic congestion, encourage the smooth flow of motorized and nonmotorized traffic, discourage incompatible land uses, and the expansion of the demand for government services beyond the reasonable capacity of the community or region to provide such services as determined by the County, and preserve desirable existing community patterns.

Ensure that the site selection and development of new communities will not overload the facilities or services of existing communities of the region and will conform to the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan and any duly adopted intergovernmental agreements or comprehensive development plans between the County and another governmental entity. Ensure that development in natural hazard areas minimizes significant hazards to public health or safety or to property or the environment. Ensure that development involving all areas and activities designated hereunder is consistent with these regulations, the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan, and any duly adopted intergovernmental agreements or comprehensive development plans between the County and another governmental entity.

Protect the public health, safety, welfare and the environment. Findings The Board of County

Commissioners finds that: All applicable notice and public hearing requirements have been followed; Based on duly noticed public hearings the Board has considered the current and foreseeable development pressures, and the applicable guidelines for designation issued by applicable state agencies. These regulations are necessary because of the current and foreseeable development pressures on and within the County.

8-205 Applicability - These regulations shall apply to all proceedings concerning the identification and designation of areas and activities of state interest, and the control of development in any area of state interest or the conduct of any activity of state interest which has been or may hereafter be designated by the Board of County Commissioners in the unincorporated areas of Boulder County, whether on public or private land.

8-206 Relationship with Other Requirements A. Where these regulations overlap with the County's requirements for zoning special use approval, Subdivision Regulations or subdivision exemption or exemption plat review, or for Comprehensive Plan location and extent review pursuant to C.R.S. 30-28-110(1) and Section 8-100 of this Code, these regulations shall control, and a separate review process under special use review, zoning, Subdivision Regulations or subdivision exemption or exemption plat review, or location and extent review shall not be required, unless expressly stated to the contrary in these regulations. Where these regulations overlap with other applicable County requirements, including but not necessarily limited to County grading and floodplain regulations, all applicable regulations shall be followed and all required County permits or approvals shall be obtained.

Review or approval of a project by a federal (Army Corp of Engineers or FERC) or state agency does not obviate, and will not substitute for, the need to obtain a permit for that project under these regulations. However, where in the opinion of the Board, federal or state review and approval processes adequately address the impacts that these regulations are designed to address, the County may agree to rely on that review and approval. (The full 32 page document is available online for your reading pleasure.)





What Threatens The Black-Footed Ferret?

By Elizabeth Miller High Country News Jan. 10, 2020 Biologists are trying to understand why the species continues to disappear in the West.

This article was originally published by Undark. It is republished here with permission.

THE NIGHT WAS SETTLING from cool to downright cold as Holly Hicks drove out into the northern Arizona grasslands with an endangered black-footed ferret in her backseat. It rode in a pet carrier lined with paper shavings during the three-hour drive from Phoenix, where it had been recently treated for injuries. During a brief layover at a house that serves as headquarters for Arizona Game and Fish Department black-footed ferret recovery staff, the animal peered out through the grate and chattered.

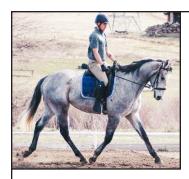
At around 8 p.m, Hicks, a biologist, put on an additional layer of clothing and a warm hat before grabbing the pet carrier and heading out for her workday. The mid-October weekend was one of four each year when staff and volunteers stay up all night driving dirt roads with a high-powered spotlight shining out the window, scanning for the green eye shine that signals a black-footed ferret staring back. Lately, many teams have come back with zero sightings.

Arizona's Aubrey Valley hosted some of the first ferrets returned to the wild in a program that now spans 30 sites across North America. Back in 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service declared that early reintroduction a success, and two years later, Aubrey Valley's ferret population peaked at 123. But then, the once-successful endangered species reintroduction site suddenly began

losing its ferrets.

Researchers are struggling to figure out why. As part of a "survivability study" that asks whether the species can even still live in northern Arizona, biologists released 24 ferrets — including Hicks' travel companion — into the valley this past fall and closely monitored them. Jennifer Cordova, a wildlife specialist with the Arizona Game and Fish Department who leads ferret program work in the Aubrey Valley, says she has seen ferrets elsewhere in the area, but that they seem to be missing from the valley itself. They might be dispersing out of the recovery area, dying from disease, starving, or becoming prey themselves. Research is underway to track the possibilities, but the last few years have been as much about figuring out which questions to ask as about answering any of them.

When species become critically endangered or vanish from their historic habitat, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service deploys reintroduction programs to restore those animals. There are some success stories. Back in 1987, a captive breeding program for California condors started with just 27, and the wild population is now estimated at nearly 300. Since wildlife managers in Colorado released 96 Canada lynx in 1999, their population has reached more than 200 in the state. Sometimes these species even enjoy banner successes, like gray wolves becoming so abundant in the northern Rocky Mountains that the population was removed from the endangered species list. But other cases, like red wolves and Mexican gray wolves, have fared less well, with wild populations estimated at 40 and 131, respectively.



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Highlander Wildlife

Along with their namesake black feet, black marks on

their faces and tails accent

share a common ancestor

found in pet stores was

been home to tens of

with the European polecat,

from which the type of ferret

domesticated more than 2,000

years ago to hunt rabbits and

control rodents. Once, North

America's prairies may have

thousands of black-footed ferrets, but that population

dropped as grasslands were converted to farms and

plague was introduced from

China about a century ago.

Both killed off prairie dogs, which make up 90% of a

ferret's diet and whose

burrows provide its only

shelter. Ferrets are solitary,

(Continued on next page.)

their otherwise tan fur. They

A reintroduction program for the black-footed ferret that

A reintroduction program for the black-footed ferret that now spans 30 states began successfully in Arizona, but then it tanked. Scientists are trying to understand what happened. J. Michael Lockhart/USFWS

that are going to need our help," said Kimberly Fraser, with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Black-footed Ferret Conservation Center in Colorado. The center's goal, she said, is to put themselves out of business by having ferrets out on the landscape, living and dying without human intervention. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service envisions a population of 3,000 breeding adult ferrets in dozens of colonies across their historic range. Fraser estimates, at best, 500 are alive in the wild now. The number had reached nearly 1,000 by the end of the 2000s, but has since drifted

"When we started out with

backward.

"I hate to say this, but I think

there are quite a few species

ferrets, I thought, 'Boy, this is such a simple system — ferrets are just totally dependent on prairie dogs and it's a pretty closed system. It's just something we should be able to gain an understanding of fairly quickly," said Dean Biggins, a research wildlife biologist with the U.S. Geological Survey. "Every question we answer regarding how the system functions leads to 10 more questions," he said. "It's amazingly complex."

When Hicks began working on black-footed ferrets in 2016, the Game and Fish Department was finalizing plans to take the relocation effort statewide. Then, the decline in the Aubrey Valley accelerated. Before they could move forward, she said, they had to step back and figure out what was going on with this reintroduction site. Ferrets like her passenger may help answer that question.

BLACK-FOOTED FERRETS ARE part of the weasel family, with skinny bodies that can reach 24 inches long, including their tails, and weigh just 1.4 to 2.5 pounds.

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nocturnal, and spend much of their time underground, said

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to miss. By 1981, the species was thought to be extinct, but then a northern Wyoming rancher's dog dropped a ferret carcass on his porch. That led to searching the area, where biologists found 130 of them. After disease swept through that colony, biologists captured the last of them to create a total captive breeding population of 18.

For the last three years, Arizona Game and Fish Dept. biologists have released ferrets wearing radio collars that broadcast their locations. The staff had some hiccups fitting a collar on an animal built like a slinky; some slipped off and some chafed. In the first two years, the researchers monitored and documented ferrets as they ranged far and wide looking for food (one traveled more than 10 miles in just a couple of nights). When their collars signaled a likely mortality and staff were able to recover the carcass, sometimes digging six feet underground to retrieve it, they found the ferrets died with an empty digestive tract.

In 2019, biologists released some of the captive-born ferrets earlier in the fall, giving the animals more time to learn how to hunt before prairie dogs began hibernating. The biologists also shifted the release sites off the southeast edge of Aubrey Valley and into the nearby DoubleO Ranch. Biologists are not sure exactly why that change has helped, but finally they are seeing more promising results. Ferrets are staying close to where they were released, and they're gaining so much weight they're bursting out of their collars. "This is the first time I've been excited about spotlighting in a few years, because the last few years just have been rough not finding anything."

Her first stop in the valley was at the GPS coordinates where the injured ferret had been trapped weeks before. When its collar had started reporting little movement, staff set about trapping it to see what had gone wrong. They spotted abrasions caused by the collar, so staff relocated the ferret to the Phoenix Zoo to recover. Its burrow was flagged with a reflector so Hicks could put it back exactly where it had been found. Hicks aimed the pet carrier toward its burrow, lay out a chunk of frozen prairie dog as enticement, and opened the door. The ferret crept back underground, as if a bit baffled by the change of scenery.

After the successful drop-off, Hicks headed down dusty roads to the last known GPS coordinates for another one of

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the collared ferrets. The Fish and Wildlife Service considers surviving the first 30 days enough to demonstrate likely long-term success. Now, the Arizona staff were trying to remove the collars before their batteries died. Hicks parked, pulled out a hand-held antenna used to pinpoint a collar, and crunched over dry grass and past cow patties, searching for the strongest signal.

"I got it," she said. A steady, low beep came through the static. She followed it until her light passed over a pair of emerald eyes. They fixed on her as she approached and pointed her headlamp down the burrow. Hicks fetched a trap from the truck, fit it into the burrow entrance, wrapped it in burlap so it would look and feel — at least to a ferret — like an extension of the tunnel, and then shoved plastic cups into surrounding burrow openings to block any back-door exits. About every hour, she returned to check the trap. When a ferret is caught, it's driven to a nearby RV, where it receives a medical work-up, including vaccination against plague.

PLAGUE OFTEN MAKES its presence obvious. A prairie dog colony is there one day, and gone the next, in what's known as an epizootic outbreak. That's contrasted with enzootic outbreaks, which affect only a portion of an animal population. In the Aubrey Valley, coyotes and even a few badgers have tested positive for plague, but not prairie dogs, where its presence would pose a direct threat to ferrets. Captive-born ferrets get a series of shots that give them an 80% chance of surviving the disease, but wild-born ferrets have to be repeatedly trapped to receive the full inoculation. Even then, if all the prairie dogs have died, ferrets will starve.

Biggins suspects researchers initially underestimated the threat of plague because they were focusing on epizootic outbreaks. When Biggins vaccinated half a colony of ferrets in Montana, their survival rose 240% — a sign that plague had been present even though they hadn't seen the typical population drop it brings. Now he believes plague is "really difficult to detect, but a really big problem for ferrets." After part of the prairie dog colony in the Aubrey Valley was dusted with an insecticide that wipes out plague-carrying fleas, that particular area seemed to have a higher density of prairie dogs, according to Cordova. A more formal study launches this year. But it will be time-consuming and expensive — \$25 per acre — to cover several thousand acres of prairie dog colony in the Aubrey Valley.

The speed at which these ferrets disappear, Biggins said, suggests there are more problems than plague. Maybe they're not finding enough food, or maybe they become prey themselves. A lower density of prairie dogs might also mean they're essentially working harder to make a living. Last spring, after a ferret sighting was reported on the far side of the nearest town from the Aubrey Valley, Game and Fish Department staff went out with spotlights and found

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two. "It's like, are we not looking in the right places?" Cordova said.

In October, the scientists ran a study on whether dogs can be trained to find ferrets. It overlapped with the collar study, so handlers could quickly verify the dog's accuracy and reward them with a ball to chase, said Kayla Fratt of Working Dogs for Conservation, a nonprofit based in Montana that collaborated on the study. In a small area where they could sniff every burrow, dogs were right 97% of the time. On a larger scale, the rate fell to half that. "Spotlight surveying and using scent detection dogs have basically the same detection rates, but spotlight surveying usually requires three to four nights of surveys, and dogs cover that same ground in four hours and you can survey in the daytime," said Jesse Boulerice of the Wildlife Ecology Institute, another Montana nonprofit that collaborated on the study.

It all seems a bit like tracing a single thread through a tangle of strings; the researchers run somewhere that might be useful, but miss the sought-after end point. "When you don't know what you're dealing with, you kind of start picking different things and experimenting," Hicks said. "Is there something in the landscape that we're constantly missing? That's also quite a possibility. We don't know." Biggins offered advice for other groups working on species conservation: "Try to do proactive things to expand populations before you get into a bind," he said.

Arizona's fall count ended with 20, twice what they saw in 2018, but 14 of those were new releases. Research has correlated drought years with fewer prairie dog kits, so after 2019's dry monsoon season, they likely won't release more ferrets this year, Hicks said. How the resident population will fare remains to be seen.

DRIVING TO CHECK a trap, Hicks trailed the spotlight beam over knots of sagebrush, a dozen deer, and three skunks. Then she drifted to a stop and watched as a ferret ducked in and out of its burrow, and then turned its green eyes toward her. This one didn't have a collar on. "I like surprise ferrets," she said.

It could be one of the ferrets whose collars were already removed, or it could be wild-born, she said. "If it's a brand new one that we've never caught, that's super exciting." The only way to know for certain would be to trap it and check it for a microchip.

Looping back to check on that ferret shortly after 4 a.m., Hicks turned her light onto the field, and groaned, "Oh, man." Bright green eyes peered from a nearby burrow. The ferret had evaded the trap she had set.

"We'll try again," Hicks said. But maybe it was a good sign: "It shows that he's savvy."

Elizabeth Miller is an award-winning journalist who writes about wildlife, public lands, and energy development.

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As Natural As The Weather

By Brian Calvert High Country News Jan. 17, 2020

Skiing and snowmobiling: With human impacts felt everywhere, we need a new environmental ethic.

This time of year, two distinct groups make their way to the Rocky Mountain backcountry: the skiers and the snowmobilers. In the mountain passes of Colorado, you'll find ski tracks on one side of the highway and snowmobile tracks on the other. Because of their differing approaches to wild spaces — one group seeking quiet and solitude, the other chasing thrills and covering ground — they have a long history of mutual animosity. Given the climate crisis, however, debates over public-land use, recreation or wildlife conservation are not as useful as the insights the discussion itself might give us.



Arguments over backcountry access are often framed within an outdated environmental ethics, generally over the value of nature. Inside the climate crisis, however, it's our relationship to technology that warrants examination. We need an ethics to match our technological prowess, one of responsibility that understands humans as a part of nature, whether they're on skis or snow machines. I come from a family of "slednecks" (my aunt and uncle were competitive racers and hill-climbers), but I also enjoy backcountry skiing. A machine can carry you deep into the natural sublime as well as a pair of skis can. Both of these are merely forms of recreation, and neither provides a useful ethics for the Anthropocene.

We humans lack an ethics to match our ingenuity. Our technology is so powerful that it has created the illusion of our separation from nature, undermining our ethical approach to the world around us. When Aldo Leopold, the godfather of conservation, compares nature to a machine and us to people tinkering with it, saying that we should not take apart what we can't put back together, he underscores the problem.

We need to understand ourselves — and everything we build — as part of nature. Strachan Donnelley, who founded Chicago's Center for Humans and Nature, a think tank for environmental ethics, suggests an "ethics of responsibility" borne from this understanding. "In a time of overweening and collective technological power, with its indefinite global and temporal reach, we are ethically enjoined to take care and be cautious," he writes. "Human powers of action dangerously outstrip capacities for knowledge and wisdom. We are to do nothing that would





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throw evolved man and nature disastrously off balance, threaten their creative being, and thwart their emergent complexity."

Consider my Aunt Ellen, who keeps a bird book and binoculars close at hand, who packed horses into Wyoming's Wind River Range for a living, and who won a world championship in snowmobile drag racing on a sled she built with her



husband, my Uncle Ward. In Aunt Ellen's heyday as a rider, the machine was an extension of her will, and its track and paddles would dig into the snow and propel her through powder, so that she was floating, almost flying, through the mountains, as much a part of nature as the snow and the stone beneath.

To see this as natural calls for an ethics beyond nature, one that acknowledges technology but moves us toward what Donnelley calls "purposiveness." If all we do is a part of nature, then we have responsibilities. Humans have evolved — with all our technological power — as "nature's most significant actors." Because of this, we have as much responsibility for the world as a parent has for a newborn. "This paradigm of responsibility for our own offspring is the model for the responsibility for the care of all of life and nature," Donnelley writes.

This responsibility demands better ethics.

Rather than debate whether snowmobilers value nature as much as skiers do, we might better spend the time in search of an ethical approach that encompasses technology. The next time I yank a starter rope, or turn an ignition key, or buckle up a polymer plastic ski boot, I might well consider how natural this is, then take responsibility for the consequences.

Brian Calvert is the editor-in-chief of High Country News.





Dedicated Jet Routes Over Our Canyons

Metroplex - Denver

Back twenty five years ago when Denver International Airport opened and the new routes of jets leaving the airport started making significant noise pollution over the canyon communities directly west of Metro Denver efforts by Coal Creek Canyon residents were made to make the routes alternate so as to fairly spread this noise pollution across the region instead of impacting just the few routes the jets were taking. After calling to complain and writing letters to administration at the new airport we began to see some improvement by way of alternating routes.

At least a couple of years ago this jet noise began to be noticeably concentrated on just a few routes over the lesser densely populated areas of the foothills as it had in the beginning. Now it has become public that the FAA has decided they need to reroute flight patterns for many reasons: probably some valid and yet without proper public notice by way of inclusive town hall meetings and public hearings to the most affected populations as their written goals state. And most notably little attention addressed to the noise pollution effects on wildlife living in the foothills; their mating, calving and migratory patterns that will surely be negatively affected by the change to flight patterns only over the few locales with fewer people.

(From the Metroplex Website) The FAA is redesigning

airspace and addressing inefficiencies, introducing new Performance Based Navigation (PBN) procedures, and making use of Time Based Flow Management (TBFM) to make the Denver Metroplex airspace more efficient and improve access to its airports. The effort focuses on Centennial (APA), Rocky Mountain Metropolitan (BJC), and Denver International (DEN).

The FAA has adopted a structured process for executing Metroplex projects. The process includes multiple opportunities for public involvement as the agency proceeds through the design, required environmental analysis, and implementation of procedures. The FAA has a structured, publicized method to advertise the workshops, as well as collect public comments. (This method never included Coal Creek Canyon residents, at least not in ways we in the canyon could see and respond to.)

Noise Exposure - Reported as Number of People - Desired Trend: Decrease Source: FAA Office of Environment and Energy - Number of persons exposed to significant aircraft noise (regardless of whether their houses or apartments have been sound-insulated). Significant aircraft noise levels are currently defined as values greater than or equal to Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) 65 decibels (dB).

A Noise Inventory airport is defined as any airport that

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reported having at least 365 jet departures for the year being used in the analysis. Major assumptions on local traffic utilization come from obtaining AEDT datasets that were developed for an airport and ETMS.

Scope - The metric tracks the residential population exposed to significant aircraft noise around U.S. airports. Significant aircraft noise is defined as aircraft noise above a Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) 65 decibels (dB). The weighting of the nighttime events accounts for the increased interfering effects of noise during the night when ambient levels are lower and people are trying to sleep.

Completeness - No actual count is made of the number of people exposed to significant aircraft noise. Aircraft type and event level are current. Reliability - The Integrated Noise Model has been validated with actual acoustic measurements at airports. The population exposure methodology has been thoroughly reviewed by an International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) task group and was most recently validated for a sample of airport-specific cases.

Here are excerpts from letters regarding these issues: Michael Bennet U.S. Senator and Joe Neguse Member of Congress wrote to the FAA on Dec. 12, 2019. "Dear Administrator Dickson: We write to urge the FAA to extend the comment period for the Denver Metroplex Final Environmental Assessment and to provide a briefing on the differences between the Draft EA and Final EA to congressional offices. (This request was denied.) As we have outlined in previous letters, Colorado residents have expressed several concerns regarding the current and proposed flight paths, including the effect of increased noise on public health and the environment.

In addition, our constituents have expressed concerns to our office about the length of the comment period, given the complexity of the information and the proximity to the holidays. Since the changes made remain unclear, we respectfully request the FAA extend the comment period...without an extension and further explanation, our constituents will remain unable to provide adequate feedback."

Here are parts of a letter to the FAA from the Gilpin County Commission dated Dec. 20, 2019 (There has since been a town hall meeting in Gilpin County on Jan. 13, 2019 with very little notice to the public and any results from that meeting are currently unknown.) "The County has numerous concerns with the EA proposed action as it relates to significant impacts under NEPA. The county's noise exposure, aircraft hazard exposure, and degradation of historical properties is of grave concern. The EA does not fully consider and evaluate the potential for permanent significant impacts to Gilpin County, wildlife, environment, historical assets or to its residents.

Actual noise and its effects on threatened species, residents and our environment have not been collected and analyzed as to how Gilpin County will ultimately be impacted. The addition of noise generated by the concentrated flight paths will have a greater impact due to the low ambient noise level in our rural mountain

community. Apparently, the FAA has adopted a public policy approach that damages wildlife, property and veterans with disabilities including residents with combat related PTSD without adequately studying impacts of the proposed flight paths.

(Under the Assess Effects) It was pointed out to the FAA that the National Park Service uses a different standard than those used by other agencies to determine if there is an impact. As the NPS is the only federal agency that is qualified to assess effects: i.e. FAA metrics are furthermore established for cities and communities. A comparatively smaller noise increase in rural and natural areas, that depend upon quiet and solitude as part of the setting, results in a more substantive effect than the FAA's metric. Furthermore, the mountainous terrain and topography need to be taken into account when reviewing the impact in Gilpin County, where noise reverberates and is amplified."

Excerpts from Congressional Representative Joe Neguse Letter to the FAA on Nov. 19, 2019: "Leaving out specific communities does not provide an accurate picture of the impact, and leaves my constituents feeling unheard and unrepresented in the process.

I also support any actions you can take to move the flight path away from densely inhabited communities and sensitive wilderness areas. Constituents in Gilpin, Boulder and Jefferson Counties are subjected to increased air traffic over their homes, which disturb their way of life. Gilpin is home to the James Peak Wilderness Area and Golden Gate State Park – both of which are treasured public lands that would be greatly disturbed by an increase in air traffic overhead."

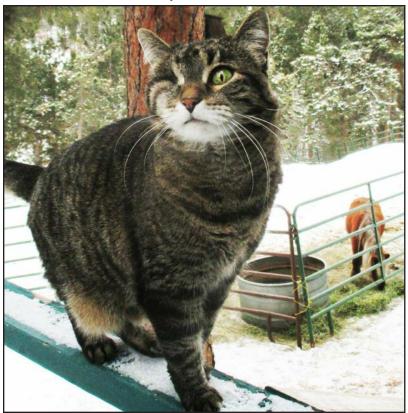
So, even though the FAA held a meeting in Gilpin County last month it means little to the process of a major federal entity such as they are. We can probably count on more air traffic over Coal Creek, Golden Gate and even Boulder Canyons since we don't have the population numbers to appear on the radar (pun intended) of Metroplex's plan to streamline air traffic going out of DIA. The days of flight plans alternating routes to make less of an impact on only one portion of the foothills is probably past. Such is the plight of low density populations, we are just a drop in the bucket and don't count.

If any reader has more information in the coming days and months please share by writing a letter to the editor and it will be printed here.

By A.M. Wilks



Animals & Their Companions













Animals & Their Companions





Send in Your photos to highlandermo60@gmail.com

Previous page: Lil'bit with Rudy eating.
Right: Teddy puppy. Below: Animals Impact
Middle: Franklin.
This page: Left - Lost dog... Right: Dexter from Lisa.
Bottom right: Lincoln and Julie.
Bottom left: The Daily Kitten.





Online Banking & Chip Card Safety

From Jim Plane- State Farm Insurance

Is online banking safe? Yes — but there are some caveats. Paying attention to a few details can go a long way toward boosting your online banking security.

Online banking can greatly simplify your life, allowing you to make a mortgage payment or check an account balance anywhere with just a few clicks. But ignoring online banking best practices can leave you vulnerable to hacking. Follow these online banking safety tips to help keep your digital financial life simple — and secure.

Get password savvy

One recent study found that over 23 million users had passwords that included "123456" in the string. That's a hack waiting to happen. Random collections of completely unrelated characters, including uppercase and

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lowercase letters, numbers and symbols are best. One idea is to choose a phrase or mantra ("Travelmorethisyear19&) or song lyric and add a unique numeric code ("Storyofmylife75!"). Occasionally change your password, especially if your financial institution announces that hackers have stolen credentials from some users, and never use the same password you've used somewhere else.

Two-factor is your friend

When you sign up for two-factor authentication (2FA) with your bank, you need both a password and a special code to access your accounts. That may be a text message or a mobile app that gives you an access code every time you try to log in to your account. Password-protect your laptop and smartphone, too.

Do a regular check-in

Make an appointment on your calendar to regularly check your accounts for debits or transfers you don't recognize. You can also sign up for text or email alerts about suspicious activity, online transactions or purchases above a certain threshold.

Beware the phishing scams

Hackers have gotten more sophisticated, spoofing your bank's logos and language to send emails that seem to be legitimate. These are commonly called phishing scams, and they typically allude to a problem with an account that needs a fix — immediately. However, once you click on a link, you're directed to a fake site that asks for your username and password, which is where the hackers are able to nab your digital details. If you receive an email that looks suspicious or asks for personal information, call your





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bank instead at the phone number you know is correct, not the number in the email — and don't click on any links.

Take note of public Wi-Fi

If you're in a public spot such as a coffee shop and log in to that free wireless option, a hacker may be able to more easily access the network. Instead, use your cellular network or your smartphone as a hotspot for your computer. Or, wait until you've accessed your secure home network to dig into your bank account.

Keep devices updated

Tech companies are constantly monitoring their software for weak spots or security breaches and often release updates to help fix those issues. Set up your devices for automatic updates.

5 Things to Know about Chip Cards

Chip cards are one more way to help you prevent credit theft.

With so many credit card scams, merchants and credit card companies are looking for ways to make credit card transactions more secure. So are consumers. One powerful solution is probably in your wallet, in the form of a thumb-size metallic square on your credit cards. The square is a computer chip, which turns your credit card into a chip card and makes it impossible for hackers to clone credit cards.

Unlike the magnetic stripe on traditional credit cards, chip cards don't store sensitive information. Instead, each time the card is used, a unique transaction code is generated. If hackers intercept that transaction, they will not be able to use the code again.

With the introduction of chip cards in late 2015, the United States is following the lead of European countries, which adopted them several years before. Nearly 90 percent of credit card users commonly use chip cards.

As you get up to speed on chip cards, keep these five facts in mind:

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- 1. Insert, don't swipe: Instead of swiping the magnetic stripe, you insert the chip card into a chip reader.
- 2. More secure, but not foolproof: Though chip cards are more secure, they can still be compromised. If your physical card is lost or stolen, it can be used by someone else since most cards only require a signature. What's more, the credit card chip doesn't protect against online fraud, so your card could still be compromised by Internet purchases.
- 3. They're slower: We've all grown used to the speed of swiping, but the chip reader takes longer. Expect to spend a few more seconds at the checkout line.
- 4. You can use the magnetic stripe as backup: While you should always use the chip reader, not all retailers have it installed or activated yet. If they do not, chip cards also have a magnetic stripe you can use.
- 5. Fraud liability doesn't change for the consumer, but it does change for the card issuer and the merchant at point of sale: If there are fraudulent transactions on your credit card, you still have the same fraud protections with a chip card as before (you may be required to pay up to \$50 for those transactions, but often you will not be charged). However, the liability for fraud may shift to the merchant or the issuer of the card reader if the terminal is not EMV-compliant.



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A Prayer For A Duck

By Ingrid Winter

A female Mallard duck Is brought To Greenwood She looks good Good weight No fractures Perfect wing condition She was found On a lake Standing on the ice Unable to move away We examine her And can't find anything wrong Except that her blood test shows That she is highly anemic Which explains Why she is so docile

And lethargic
But of course
The question is why?
Why is she anemic
When there is no injury
No blood loss
No obvious illness?

We prepare
A cage for her for the night
A little food
A heating pad
Soft towels
And let her be
But before
I turn off the light
And close the door
I take one last look
At this beautiful creature
Sitting there looking up to me
With soft gentle eyes
And I say a prayer for her —



Asking source
To let her rest
And sleep and maybe
Heal
To be reunited with her mate
Or else
To take her back
To where we all come from
And will return one day –
A place
Where big soft wings
Will enfold us
Ever so gently
And carry us
Away.

Photo by Alexa Boyes. Greenwood Wildlife Rehabilitation Center is a non-profit organization whose mission is to rehabilitate orphaned, sick, & injured wildlife for release into appropriate habitats. 303.823.8455



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Healthy Heart Makes For A Healthy Brain

By Tibi Puiu Science of Prevention

Researchers found that improving vascular health in people aged 50 or older could also have benefits for the brain. According to an exciting new study, patients who underwent intense treatment for hypertension were less likely to develop minor cognitive and memory problems — the kind that often progress into dementia at old age — than patients who received standard care.

The research was part of a broader cardiovascular study called Sprint, which began in 2010 and involved more than 9,000 people with hypertension across 102 sites in the United States. High blood pressure, also called hypertension, is dangerous because it makes the heart work harder to pump blood out to the body. The condition is diagnosed when a person has a systolic blood pressure between 130 and 180 and, if left unchecked, can lead to hardening of the arteries, stroke, heart failure, and other medical problems

The main goal of Sprint was to see whether people who received intensive treatment that lowered their blood pressure to 120 were doing significantly better than those who received standard treatment which lowered their blood pressure to around 140. These participants were also cognitively assessed.

In the three years following the study, those who had blood pressure below 120 were 19% less likely to develop

mild cognitive impairment than those who received standard care. Additionally, blood pressure treatments significantly lowered the risk of stroke and death, as reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA). Dementia is the loss of cognitive functioning — thinking, remembering, and reasoning — and behavioral abilities to such an extent that it interferes with a person's quality of life. One of the most important diseases that cause dementia is Alzheimer's, which affects 6 million Americans.

There is no cure for Alzheimer's but since the disease is preceded by mild cognitive impairment, the new findings suggest that keeping blood pressure in optimal parameters might stave off dementia or at least delay it considerably. Researchers might know for sure in future studies that follow patients who have received blood pressure treatment for a longer time.

Until then, patients with blood pressure over 130 shouldn't hurry to talk to their doctors about lowering it even further. There is still much we need to find out about how results differ by age and the side effects. But, since the results have been so promising, the Alzheimer's Association announced that it will award more than \$800,000 to support a follow-up trial. In 2019, another research team found convincing evidence that gum disease may be gradually causing Alzheimer's.



50th Anniversary Of NEPA

By Adam M. Sowards High Country News Dec. 6, 2019

NEPA transformed federal land management — and has fallen short
A look back at the ground-breaking legislation on its 50th anniversary.

In late January 1969, a blowout on Unocal's Platform A leaked 3 million gallons of crude oil into the Pacific Ocean, just 6 miles from Santa Barbara, California. The spill — at the time, the largest in U.S. history — spread over 800 square miles, coated 8 miles of beaches and killed thousands of animals. Images of the devastation shocked a public increasingly worried about the environment and helped spur Congress to pass a sweeping law aimed at preventing similar disasters in the future — the National Environmental Policy Act.

President Richard Nixon signed NEPA into law on Jan. 1, 1970, from his home office on the Pacific Coast. The signing was a fitting launch for the environmental decade of the 1970s — a time when "America pays its debt to the past by reclaiming the purity of its air, its waters, and our living environment," as Nixon said in his signing statement. "It is literally now or never."

On the law's 50th anniversary, it is worth considering its origins, development and significance — including the ways it has transformed American environmental governance, and how its promise has diminished. Five decades ago, the federal government recognized its responsibility to reduce environmental problems. But while

NEPA provided a road map, only some of those routes have been taken.

Congress introduced, amended and passed NEPA quickly and only 15 legislators voted against it, indicating a widespread consensus on the need for federal environmental regulation. The law is relatively straightforward: Besides creating the Council on Environmental Quality to advise the president and issue guidance and regulations, it provided general principles to direct federal activities and devised a process to implement them.

At the heart of the legislation lay an optimistic belief that economic growth, environmental protection and human welfare might align without sacrifice or rancor. The law highlights the need to "create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony, and fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans." It clearly takes a long-range view, incorporating tomorrow's environmental fate into today's decisions.

These values, though, tend to be forgotten, overshadowed by a procedural hurdle that changed business-as-usual for federal planning and decision-making. Before undertaking "major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment" — offering timber sales on federal land, for example, or building an interstate highway — federal agencies and their partners now had to submit "a detailed statement." That environmental impact statement, or EIS, needed to be interdisciplinary and thorough,



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Highlander Environmental

detailing any environmental problems likely to result from the proposed project and listing alternatives, including more costly ones. Then, the public was invited to comment. The procedure significantly lengthened and complicated federal land-use planning and politicized it like never before.

The interdisciplinary requirement meant that engineers had to consult biologists, foresters needed hydrologists, and so on, effectively forcing agencies like the Bureau of Land Management to hire a range of specialists and ask different and often harder questions than ever before.

The new process was transformative. By investigating alternatives rather than simply presenting a proposal as a fait accompli, greater degrees of choice and openness came to the process, as well as a franker acknowledgement that building dams or offering gas leases cause environmental problems. The addition of a public comment period also made environmental decision-making more democratic. Although the final decision was not open to a popular vote, the EIS process involved the public much more directly than ever before.

But the EIS process with its public input also opened doors to lawsuits, a result as American — and as controversial — as the public lands themselves. Congress had added the EIS procedure to protect the "productive harmony" at the law's core. But the strategy failed. The year after Nixon signed NEPA, the D.C. Circuit Court declared its goals flexible, but not its procedures: Federal agencies could interpret "productive harmony" however they liked, as long as they filed an EIS. In 1989, in what has become a controlling opinion in Robertson v. Methow Valley Citizens Council, the U.S. Supreme Court went further, declaring that federal agencies did not even have to preserve "productive harmony." Instead, it found that "NEPA merely prohibits uninformed — rather than unwise — agency action." In other words, the EIS needed to list all the options, but agencies were not required to choose the best one.

In the decades since, NEPA's critics have periodically tried to gut the law further, such as the Trump administration seeking to exempt certain Forest Service



projects from its rules. Detractors commonly bemoan the lengthy and litigious process that fulfilling NEPA requirements has become, which is easier to track than the law's successes. Adherence is costly in time and personnel, especially for agencies already underfunded, understaffed and facing backlogs of work. NEPA's procedures can be rigid, and for a culture bent on efficiency, almost nothing seems as bad as that.

Yet returning to an era when government officials made decisions without considering environmental impacts or public input would erode democratic governance. NEPA's opening section ends by recognizing "that each person should enjoy a healthful environment and that each person has a responsibility to contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the environment." That sentiment captures NEPA's essence from its birth to its golden anniversary: Citizens deserve healthy surroundings, and they also bear a responsibility for securing them through the faithful execution of the law.

Adam M. Sowards is an environmental historian, professor and writer. He lives in Pullman, Washington.

Editor's Note: It is unfortunate the higher aims of NEPA have yet to be achieved and depend upon the leadership of leaders we have yet to elect. This election year it may help voters to consider that when deciding who to vote for.





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Update: BuffaloFieldCamgaign.org

Bison face a harsh and sometimes brutal existence in Yellowstone National Park. In winter this ecosystem is well known for its deep freezes, long winters, and healthy populations of natural predators. However, it is human impact that offers the only significant threat to the last wild bison.

Our actions to protect wild bison follow a carefully planned, multi-pronged strategy. We permanently protect buffalo through our patrols, grassroots citizen advocacy, litigation, and legislation!

Our Frontline Bison Defense Patrols BFC volunteers conduct daily field patrols. By patrol we mean two or more of our dedicated volunteers traveling the roads, trails, valleys, hills, and habitat of the last wild buffalo. These patrols document the locations of buffalo and other wildlife, and watch for signs of harassment, abuse, or slaughter of animals or their ecosystem—especially buffalo!

Depending on weather, patrols might use a combination of vehicles, boots, skis, snowshoes, and/or mountain bikes—but we are almost always patrolling and protecting the buffalo. Our teams monitor key bison migration corridors and core habitat areas along the Yellowstone boundary year-round, including several months of 24-hour coverage through each cold winter when the buffalo need our protection the most.

When we hear of buffalo being bothered, their migration interfered with, etc.—we act. BFC might: directly monitor buffalo harassment, capture, and slaughter by government agents, videotape the cruelty and waste of forced herd relocations ("hazing"), directly intervene to protect wild bison from harm, engage in a wide variety of other actions.

Whatever the weather or time of day: we are prepared to stand with the buffalo. BFC is a grassroots organization that spends our time and money on action rather than on self-promotion. However, those who mean harm to buffalo—as well as those who care for them—know exactly who we are.

When our patrols encounter harassment of buffalo, in or outside of the park, we document the occurrence with whatever tools we have (eye witnesses, notebooks, still and video cameras, etc.). As each situation unfolds, we slowly and safely move as close to the action as we can—making the perpetrators aware of our presence and our documentation activities as we determine what potential next steps to take.

BFC volunteers seek to neutralize situations in a nonviolent yet uncompromising manner, while at all times focusing on creating the best outcomes for the buffalo. When close enough, we use various equipment to capture images of faces, badge numbers, vehicle license plates, presence/use of firearms, and other information for possible use in the future by buffalo defense litigators and others who might find it useful—including national and global media outlets.

Using cameras and images as our only "weapons," we share footage of current buffalo atrocities via every method available to us. We have found that the public's viewing of

and outrage about what is happening is one of the best paths for true and lasting change on behalf of the buffalo.

There are, of course, many tense moments in the field during our campaigns to protect the buffalo. If circumstances escalate and become potentially violent, BFC teams simply will not engage or validate such behavior.

We are often asked why we don't report harassment of the magnificent

buffalo to federal, state, or local authorities, and there is one simple answer: Because it is exactly these agencies that are abusing and/or killing the buffalo! And you, dear reader, are paying for it with your tax dollars (if you are a US taxpayer).

In addition to documenting and interrupting buffalo abuse, our field patrols continue adding to our comprehensive collection of scientific data, video footage, and personal experiences with buffalo in their native habitat. Our patrols document every action against the buffalo, and support a wide range of other activities designed to protect them. We are always watching...

Highway Safety Patrol and Safe Passages

Our teams also regularly work to alert passing motorists to the presence of buffalo on and near the highways to reduce accidents and increase public awareness of wildlife migration corridors, and we successfully petitioned the state to lower the speed limit through buffalo migration corridors.

Roam Free - Wild is the Way!



Fleeting Pleasures: Manufactured Happiness

By Frosty Wooldridge

Today, you may take a trip to Disney World for the ride of a lifetime. A quick excursion on a Caribbean cruise promises to whisk you away from the world's troubles. Drug stores offer pills to cure your headaches, insomnia and sexual dysfunction. A gleaming car races into the sunset providing romance that promises a happy ending. A Sports Utility Van plows through big mud puddles to land you at the top of a rugged mountain pass.

In other words, "things" become the origin of your happiness. What things make you happy? A major soft drink company features a powerful advertisement at the movies: open a bottle of "happiness." Exactly how do you become happy by drinking a bottle of soda pop? Another advertisement shows families sitting down to a "happy meal" in a wondrous setting. How long do you remain happy with a "thing" that you bought?

All "things" become a 21st century phenomenon: manufactured happiness.

In America today, corporations drone their "happiness" from one commercial to the other in an endless line of material goods. Once you possess that sleek new car, you may drive into eternal bliss. A certain pill guarantees you younger skin, perfect sleep and fabulous sexual delight.

However, there's a catch. For countless people, happiness eludes them whether by fate, choice or circumstance.

On one of my bicycle adventures, a preacher walked up to me to brag about how he decided to take three months

leave to bicycle across America. I met him in Durango, Colorado on my own coast-to-coast bicycle adventure.

"I preached for 25 years, raised my kids and asked my wife if I could make this journey to find myself," he said. "She gave me her blessings."

"That's great," I said. "What have you learned?"

"I never knew of anything beyond my congregation," he said. "I've been frightened at what I see out here in the world beyond my flock. Many people argue with me about God. Some don't like me preaching to them. Others could care less about God. They believe so much more differently than I."

"That's the beauty of adventure," I said. "It teaches every traveler a new lesson daily. I'm happy for you to take such a risk of renewal. This is your chance to allow the world to teach you. Listen well. It will make you a better pastor."

Another time while on tour, a 40-year-old fellow walked up to me, "Why are you traveling on that bike? How far have you come?"

"About 100,000 miles in my lifetime," I said.

"I could never do that," he said. "I nearly died during childbirth. I don't want to tempt fate. I can't free myself from my fear of death."

I said, "Has your story done you any good for 40 years?" "I can't help it," he said. "It runs in my mind."

"That's a choice," I said. "How about deleting the word 'can't' and insert the word 'can.' Quit defeating yourself with your thought patterns that support your failures via your words."

(Continued on page 30.)



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"I never considered that," he said. "Start thinking and speaking in positive terms," I said. "You can conquer the world if you choose to think you can."

I met an old man once in Christchurch, New Zealand. He spoke these words that I remember to this day.

"There was once a man who told a joke to an audience three times," he said. "Everyone laughed the first time he told the joke. He told it again for a second time a few minutes into his speech, but only half the audience laughed. Finally, he told it one more time, but no one laughed. He admonished the audience, 'If you won't laugh at my joke after you heard it for the third time, why do you keep crying about the same problems over and over again?'

As with the 40-year-old man, he obsessed with his near-death problem for most of his life. It crippled him against his potential. The preacher sat inside his pulpit to isolate himself from the tribulations of the world.

Is your life moving toward genuine happiness, try a new coat on for size:

If we obsess over problems, they become real. Choose to delete them from your daily mental and verbal expressions. Choose a sense of elation in your daily routine.

Instead of focusing on "things" for happiness, seize the



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(Happiness can be something as simple as a little brother helping his sister onto the saddle of a horse, or pulling her in a wagon or going fishing, in Golden, Colorado, my home town.) Photo by Frosty Wooldridge

moment whether it is a walk in the park, watching a movie or going dancing. If you really want a taste of happiness, volunteer to help someone less fortunate or some cause such as picking up cans and plastic out of a river. Drastically reduce; even delete the television from your daily living.

Authentic happiness stems from living simply, creating purpose in your life and sharing it with friends you enjoy. You can't get any of that out of a soda pop bottle.



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We Went To Jail For Our Great Granddaughters

By Emma Marris High Country News Jan. 14, 2020

Protesting the Jordan Cove natural gas facility and its pipeline brings an environmental writer and a rancher together.

Every year, the same bald eagle appears in the same tall Douglas fir, just across from Sandy Lyon's window at her house in the foothills of the Oregon Cascades. That's how she knows the coho are back.

In 1990, long before I met Sandy, she and her husband, Russ, bought 306-acre Fate Creek Ranch in Douglas County, Oregon. The creek ran cold all summer and was shaded by big old trees. It was perfect salmon spawning habitat, but there weren't any fish, thanks to a culvert and irrigation dam that blocked their way. So the Lyons removed the barriers, fenced cattle out of the creek and replanted the banks, adding boulders and logjams to create areas for salmon to lay their eggs.

The Lyons saw the first spawning coho in the winter of 2001-2002, their scarlet bodies battered from making the same trip their ancestors had for thousands of years. Sandy told me much of this story in November, while we were sitting together on the carpet in the ceremonial office of Oregon Gov. Kate Brown. We had never met before, but we were thrown together because we were both protesting

a proposed gas pipeline, part of the Jordan Cove Energy Project. It would start near my home in Klamath County, slice through the middle of the Lyons' salmon restoration on Fate Creek, and continue to a proposed liquefaction and export terminal on the coast, in Coos Bay.

The company behind the project, Pembina, would dam Fate Creek, rip up all the trees and vegetation along a 75-foot swath, dig a huge trench across it for the pipe, and then "restore" it. "We can't trust that they would do a good job of putting it all back right," Sandy told me. And the permanent removal of shading vegetation means the stream would inevitably heat up, which could kill the coho. "It is a double whammy. We are already fighting global warming," she added.

Climate change is, broadly speaking, what brought me to this sit-in. I began fighting the pipeline because of the millions of metric tons of (Continued on next page.)

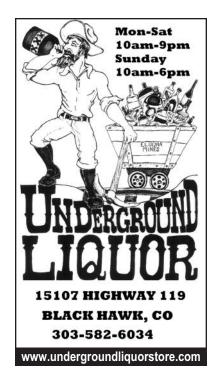




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Highlander Issues

greenhouse gases it would emit each year. But as I worked with ranchers, members of the Klamath, Hoopa Valley and Yurok tribes and others, I came to see the infrastructure itself as dangerous and destructive. The company would clear a swath up to 95 feet wide to bury a 36-inch-diameter pipe across 229 miles of mountainous, forested land, crossing more than 300 waterways and risking each and every one. And it would do so against the objections of tribal governments and landowners like Sandy. The whole project seems like a too on-the-nose allegory of how capital is allowed to crash through our communities and nonhuman ecosystems alike — how the metal tentacles of the rich are allowed to go anywhere and do whatever the hell they please.

SANDY AND I WERE NOT ALONE in the governor's office; nearly 100 of us stayed for eight hours. To pass the time, we told stories, sang and shared meals. Sandy and I agreed to keep track of each other, to watch out for one another as the day unfolded.

At around 8 p.m., Gov. Brown walked into the office, flanked by police. She listened to several individual pleas, but said she could not come out against the pipeline while state agencies were still reviewing permits, adding, "I believe Oregonians are best served by knowing there is a fair process and that I'm not putting my finger on the scale one way or another." As she left, some people started to

boo, while others began to sing. A few minutes later, state troopers told us we had to leave too, or risk arrest.

Twenty-one people decided to stay. We sat and held hands as police removed us one by one. Sandy and I were both nervous; we chatted to keep calm. I told her about explaining to my small children that sometimes getting arrested was a good thing. She told me about her son, now in his late 20s, who grew up on the ranch and isn't sure he wants to have kids of his own in a warming world.

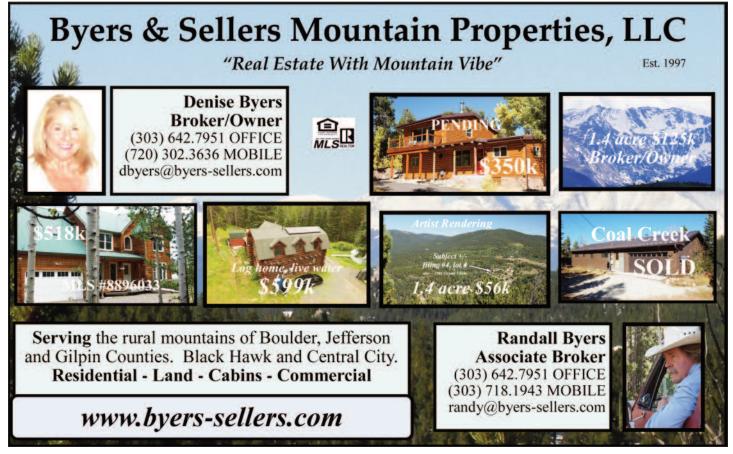
A fellow protester taught us a short song with a sweet melody that a friend had written. She changed the words just a bit to fit our situation:

Gentle heart, gentle soul, gentle mind, mind Life is strange, love remains, all the time. Like an eagle in the sky, Like a fish in the sea,

Like my great-granddaughter watching over me.

That last line got both Sandy and me in the throat, and we started to cry. Neither of us had been arrested before, but with our great-granddaughters watching over us, we felt a surge of determination.

Eventually, we were cuffed with plastic zip-ties and led to a paddy wagon. This was hard on Sandy, who is in her 70s; the stiff plastic cuffs bruised her wrists, and she got a pretty wicked migraine. She wept, but with her hands cuffed behind her, she had to wipe her tears on the shoulders of the



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young man cuffed next to her, an activist younger than her son.

At the jail, we were unloaded, searched and tossed in a couple of holding cells—one for the women and one for the men. It was by now long after midnight, and Sandy was in pain and exhausted. There were no chairs or benches in our cell, just thin plastic mats on the floor. She curled up on one and tried to sleep. Finally, at around 5 a.m., we were released.

The next morning, several of us had breakfast at Denny's. We learned that our story had been picked up by the Associated Press and several Oregon newspapers. Our goal had been to put very public pressure on the governor to take a stand, and now thousands of people were reading about the pipeline and her refusal to oppose it. Sandy

looked radiant. She said she had made a bigger difference in one long, scared and miserable day than she had in

fifteen years of writing comments to federal agencies and attending permit hearings.

Brown to oppose the project and pledge to fight it. After all, she herself has said that "climate change isn't looming — it's here. How many reports must the U.N. issue, and how many warnings must global scientists give before we listen and act?"

Sandy and I will stay in touch. The fight

I hope Brown herself will listen. And I hope she will act. And I hope that when our great-granddaughters are grown women, eagles will still feast on coho in Fate Creek every winter.

Emma Marris is an environmental writer in Klamath Falls, Oregon.

Photo of Eagle courtesy Diane Bergstrom.

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Power Update

February 2020

The Dangers of High Winds

High winds and power lines don't mix. Over the holidays this past year, our mountain territory experienced severe winds that caused several extended outages. Living in the mountains exposes more members to these type of strong winds.

The eastern side of the Rocky Mountains experience strong winds and windstorms from something called "downslope winds." Mountain-driven windstorms are caused by winds accelerating as they fall along the downwind side of a mountain range, and are most common in the fall and winter.

These become more dangerous when you include the potential impact to United Power's electrical system. If you're out during a windstorm and experience any of the following situations, please make every attempt to avoid the area until wind dies down or our crews are able to make repairs.

- Galloping Lines. These occur when strong winds blow lines up and down or side to side. These are more dangerous when lines make contact with one another.
- Debris in Lines. High winds can topple trees, poles or other nearby vegetation or infrastructure. If you notice debris touching a line, report it to the co-op at 303-637-1350. Do not attempt to remove debris from power lines.
- Downed Lines. In bad situations, lines may even be downed. Downed lines are very dangerous. Always assume downed lines are powered and never approach them.



2020 Annual Meeting & Director Election

Wednesday, April 15, 2020

Riverdale Regional Park (Adams County Fairgrounds) 9755 Henderson Road Brighton CO 80601

The Annual Meeting & Director Election is a special opportunity for members to celebrate United Power's successes over the past year with one another and cooperative leadership.

Event Schedule:

4:30 p.m. | Registration, Dinner & Entertainment

6:30 p.m. | Meeting, Election Results, Prizes

More information available at www.unitedpower.com.

February Bills to Reflect Rate Changes

In November, the United Power Board of Directors approved rate changes for 2020 that included a modest 1.5-2% rate increase for residential members.

New Rates went into effect for energy use beginning **January 1**, so members will see these changes reflected on their **February 2019** statements.



Candidate Forums



United Power will host the following Meet the Candidate Forums where members can learn more about each of the candidates vying to serve on the Board of Directors. The following events are free to members. Light refreshments will be served. RSVPs are not required.

THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2020 | 6:30 p.m.

Carbon Valley Service Center 9586 E I-25 Frontage Road Longmont, CO 80504

FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 2020 | 7:30 a.m.

Coal Creek Canyon Community Center 3158 Highway 72 Golden, CO 80403

*Dates and locations may be subject to change.

MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2020 | 6:30 p.m.

Riverdale Regional Park – Waymire Dome 9755 Henderson Road Brighton, CO 80601

TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2020 | 7:30 a.m.

Fort Lupton Recreation Center 203 S. Harrison Avenue Ft. Lupton, CO 80621



Member Services: 303-637-1300 Coal Creek Office: 303-642-7921 ww

www.unitedpower.com

Valentine's Day Pancake Breakfast

Saturday, February 8th 7:00am - 11:00am CCCIA Hall 31528 Hwy 72



Coal Creek Canyon Gorgeous Updated Log Home - 1.82 Acres 4 BD/ 4 BA 3,817 sq.ft. \$1,100,000



171 Upper Travis Gulch Fantastic High-End Remodel 2 BD/ 2 BA 2,108 sq.ft. \$490,000



31448 Coal Creek Canyon Slice of Heaven - Barn & Corral 3 BD/ 1 BA 11+ Acres \$600,000



269 Olde Carter Lake Road Snowcapped VIEWS! 1.87 Acres 3 BD/ 2 BA 2,475 sq.ft. \$515,000



11753 Hillcrest Wonderful Remodel / Amazing Views 4 BD/ 4 BA 2,620 sq.ft. 2.18 Ac. \$569,000 3 BD/ 3 BA 2,183 sq.ft. 4.45 Ac. \$529,000 4 BD/ 4 BA 4,697 sq.ft. 1.5 Ac. \$929,900



500 Chute Road Complete Remodel - VIEWS 4.45 Acres



Coal Creek Canyon Fabulous Luxury Home VIEWS



9321 Nile Ct. Arvada Designer Home 3 BD/ 4 BA 5,362 sq.ft. \$695,00



44 Linn Lane Elegant Remodel / Timber Frame-Views 3 BD/ 4 BA 2,243 sq.ft. \$575,000



900 Camp Eden Road **Amazing Custom Remodel** 3 BD/ 2 BA 2,358 sq.ft.



11150 Circle Drive Secluded Back Deck with Hot Tub 3 BD/ 3 BA 2,048 sq.ft. 1.5 Ac. **\$480,000** 2 BD/2 BA 2,685 sq.ft. 2.5 Ac. **\$530,000**



180 Rudi Lane West Log Home Full Divide Views



1011 Rudi Lane Custom Log Home 1.47 Acres 3 BD/ 2 BA 2,236 sq.ft. \$465,000



Coal Creek Canyon Custom Log Home - 4.2 Acres 3 BD/ 4 BA 3,300 sq.ft. **\$900,000**



85 Valley View Drive Breathtaking Divide & Lake Views 4 BD/ 4 BA 3623 sq.ft. 1+Ac. \$775,000



BUY OR SELL A HOME with Kathy or Janet & USE the moving truck for FREE



Kathy Keating CRS, ABR, GRI EcoBroker **Broker Associate** 303.642.1133

For additional information & photos: www.kathykeating.com

kathykeating@mockrealty.com Janet.LoveWhereYouLive@gmail.com



Janet Ingvaldsen **Broker Associate** Realtor 720.600.9006

